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The Wild Gardens of Old California

Charles Francis Saunders

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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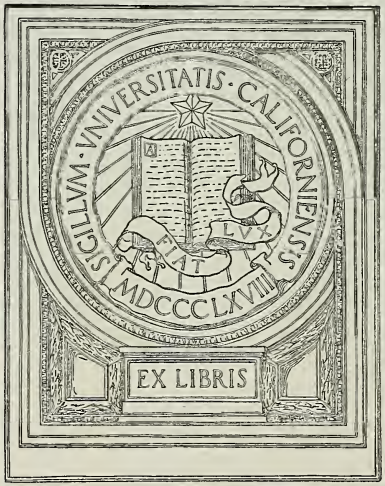

The Wild Gardens of Old California

The Author

Coming to Pasadena from Philadelphia some twenty years ago and already a botanist of note, Charles Francis Saunders found, in the natural beauty, romance and human interest of the Pacific side of the continent, material ready to his hand. It has been said of him that the subtle atmosphere and charm that literature creates for a country he has helped to weave about California and the Southwest by writings occupying a field distinctively their own. He is the author of the following books:

In a Poppy Garden *(Verse)*
California Wild Flowers *(With Elisabeth Hallowell Saunders)*
A Window in Arcady
The Indians of the Terraced Houses
Under the Sky in California
With the Flowers and Trees in California
The California Padres and Their Missions *(With J. Smeaton Chase)*
Finding the Worth-While in California
Western Flower Guide
Finding the Worth-While in the Southwest
Useful wild plants of the United States and Canada
The Southern Sierras of California
A Little Book of California Missions
Trees and Shrubs of California Gardens

THE MISSION SANTA BARBARA
FROM A PAINTING BY COLIN CAMPBELL COOPER

The Wild Gardens of Old California

A presentment OF
PADRE JUAN CRESPI AND HOW
HE WENT ON A JOURNEY; OF
DAVID DOUGLAS, THE SCOT,
AND HOW HE INTRODUCED
THE WILD FLOWERS OF OLD
CALIFORNIA INTO ENGLAND
and
SEEDS OF HOPE FOR THE DIM
AND DISTANT FUTURE

BY CHARLES FRANCIS SAUNDERS
ILLUSTRATED WITH ETCHINGS BY
EDWARD BOREIN

FOREWORD
BY
RALPH HOFFMANN

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Foreword

I BELIEVE only a few enthusiastic naturalists would be transported willingly in the flesh, to the California of 1770, and accompany the Mission fathers in their long journeys from San Diego to Carmel. The opportunity to see California in the unspoiled beauty of primitive nature would be offset, for most of us, by the inconvenience of primitive life. Charles Francis Saunders, in this charming book, takes us in spirit to the California of that early period, and introduces us to Padre Juan Crespi, a beloved associate of Padre Junipero Serra, who accompanied the first expedition that blazed El Camino Real, the highway that we now hurry along on our own, and not, like the padres, on Our Father's business.

Padre Crespi, loved the works of God then, as Mr. Saunders loves them now. The missionary priest noted in his journal many of the bright-hued flowers, which, in that spring, as they do today, lent a fleeting glory to the hills and valleys. The beauties of flower and bird, the glories of valley and mountain, did not escape his scientific yet reverent eye. He was, perhaps, better versed in theology than he was in botany, and his record of what he saw is incomplete and obscure at times, but Mr. Saunders, with the knowledge which later students of our flora have acquired, points out to us, as we in fancy accompany the observing monk, the striking floral features that he must have seen. Probably few who now hurry along the highways know the flowers any better than did Crespi; that they pay them much less heed, is certain.

Mr. Saunders has told his story with a keen understanding of the childlike nature which the Padre, the Indians who welcomed him, and the flowers which delighted him, all share. A certain quaintness of expression in his style helps admirably to summon back the age that he is depicting. Above all, no one can read this account without feeling the warmth of his love for the beauty of unspoiled nature, and without sharing in his desire to save what is still left of it from the ever-increasing encroachments of modern civilization. The book contains, also, a very practical means by which we can aid in restoring a bit, at least, of the beauty and glory that met the eyes of Padre Crespi in the spring of the year 1770.

RALPH HOFFMANN.

Carpinteria, California.
December, 1926.

The Wild Gardens of Old California

Of Padre Fray Juan Crespi, and How He Went on a Journey

I

OF PADRE FRAY JUAN CRESPI, AND HOW HE WENT ON A JOURNEY

At the Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo, near Monterey, there lived, a century and a half ago, a kindly Franciscan friar, Juan Crespi by name. He was, like several of the early Californian missionaries of his order, including the chief of them all, Padre Fray Junipero Serra, a Mallorcan by birth, and he had reached California from Mexico with that Portolá expedition which was to clinch Spain's claim to her long neglected province. Of all the devoted brotherhood who were comrades of Padre Junípero, none, they say, was so dear to him as this Padre Juan, so sunny natured, so humble and warm of heart, so altogether *simpático,* that he was affectionately known among his companions as *el beato,* or, as we should say, The Blessed. To his Indians he was little less than a saint—nay, something more than a saint, so quickly responsive was he to their needs and so understanding of their weaknesses.

Loving God, Padre Juan naturally enough loved all His

works, both great and small, and in the records he has left us, his lively enjoyment of the scenes that met his eyes in that early California, which was still a virgin land—scenes no white man had ever before looked upon—finds hearty expression. In those days, people traveled leisurely and saw correspondingly much; for the Brothers Minor of Saint Francis, even though they did not always do their California journeyings afoot, as our fancy is disposed to picture them, did them hardly more expeditiously when they went a-muleback. Crespi, you must know, accompanied Portolá on his famous marches up and down the coast between San Diego and the north, seeking the lost port of Monterey, which Don Sebastian Vizcaino had discovered over a century and a half before, and which Spain had at last realized she must occupy or lose all Alta California; and Crespi's diary shares with the notes of the engineer, Don Miguel Costansó, the distinction of being the first recorded impressions of white travelers in what we are now pleased to call the Golden State.

You do not read far in Padre Juan's lively journals before you find that he has an eye for flowers and for all other growing things. He is, to be sure, no botanist, and he makes short shrift, at times, of several diverse sorts, I suspect, under general terms not so easy to untangle. Yet even had he had training in Old World botany, it would have booted him little on this wild Hesperian coast, where nearly every plant in 1769 was as innocent of name as Adam found the flowers of Eden. He gossips artlessly of *salvia* and *romero*—sage and rosemary, as we may say—in many an entry; *hierbas olorosas*, fragrant herbs, daily trampled by the passing cavalcade, yield up a thousand undistinguished perfumes; fringing streams and afloat on the bosom of still springs, (how endearing is the

Spanish term for these bubbling fountains—*ojos de agua,* that is, eyes of water!) water cresses abound, and are greeted with enthusiasm, though less, I take it, for the charm of their sparkling white blossoms than for the crisp, peppery leaves and stems, that give a spicy tang to a sadly monotonous diet. That shambling Caliban of plants, the flat-jointed cactus or *nopal,* drops from the wayside its crabbed gift of crimson "pears," bristly and seedy, but luscious, once you learn the secret of handling them. In damp *arroyos* a myriad grapevines clamber high into the dappled sycamores and great alders, and drape the branches with clusters of purpling fruit. A fair land, indeed, is this to these sufferers from a scurvy-breeding sea voyage, or from the stabs and thirsts of a cruel *jornada* over the Lower California desert. Padre Juan is an artist in simple delineation. "We arrived this day," he says of a certain date, "in a very beautiful valley or *cañada,* on seeing which it appeared not otherwise than a cultivated or sown field, because of its much verdure; and on a little eminence in the said valley we saw a village of Gentiles with its little houses of grass, who, on seeing us, all sallied out to the road, happily and with demonstrations of rejoicing. We descended into this valley and saw that its verdure was of wild gourds, very leafy, and many wild rose bushes."

Above all else do these communities of the wild rose, which the travelers encounter continually, stir the fancy, awakening sweet memories of Spain and home, for wild roses are wild roses the world round, and all the world loves them. One day, Padre Juan breaks off a spray upon which he counts six blossoms, full blown, and a round dozen in the bud, and the discovery goes into his journal with as much care and circumstantiality as though it were the elusive port of Monterey

itself that had been found. *Rosas de Castilla,* he calls them—roses of Castile; and I think he would like to know that his name for them has not died out in this land he loved so well. Only a few years ago, I heard a Mission Indian in San Diego County call wild roses so. It was like the echo of an old music.

Can we today, I wonder, fill in the gaps in Padre Crespi's journals and picture to our fancy somewhat of the flowery scenes that cheered him as he helped blaze *El Camino Real* between San Diego and San Francisco bay, and as later he trod the trails and byways about the Mission on the River Carmelo, which from 1771 remained his home until eleven years later he left it for a heavenly? I think we can in a measure, for California is still young, and in spite of the era of floral despoliation begun by cattle barons and sheep men, intensified by the ploughs of the small-ranch folk, and brought to a dreadful climax in these last days by boulevard makers and misguided sub-dividers—in spite of all this, there is left in places enough of the primitive flora upon which to build some conception of those early wild gardens.

Let us, then, turn back the calendar and set it at mid-spring in the year of grace 1770. Padre Junípero, in the face of the malevolent arts of the arch plotter Satan, has started his first Mission, dedicated to San Diego de Alcalá; and now the second must be established at Monterey. So, while he sails north to the business by the ship that carries the stores and ecclesiastical furniture, let us accompany Juan Crespi with the land contingent of the expedition. We shall be taking between five and six weeks to the hundred and eighty Spanish leagues of travel, so that with due allowance for godly stops on high days and holy days there is leisure for some floral dalliance as we go.

"At the Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo, near Monterey, there lived, a century and a half ago, a kindly Franciscan friar, Juan Crespi by name."

Of the Flowers Padre Juan Saw as He Journeyed, and Certain Other Sights

II

OF THE FLOWERS PADRE JUAN SAW AS HE JOURNEYED, AND CERTAIN OTHER SIGHTS

THE rains are over and gone, and the face of Nature shines benignantly. The air is musical with bird song and trilling—the haunting melancholy of the wild dove's long-drawn lament and the liquid notes of the meadow lark, a bird that Saint Francis, had he known her, must have loved as he loved that Sister Lark of Umbria whose hood, he tells us, is "like the religious, and when she soars she praises God most sweetly." On mesa and valley floor and treeless loma, the mantle of vivid green is overlaid riotously with color—the orange of California poppies; the blue and lavender of sturdy lupines and lolling wild heliotrope; the mauve of owl's clover; the pale gold of sun-cups—trickles and rivulets and broad rivers of color. Down from the foothills of the purple Coast Range, it leaps and streams, gathered now into pools and lakes, now breaking in cascades and ribbons over the brink of the *arroyos* and *barrancas,* to reappear on the hither side and spread illimitably in kaleidoscopic flood, until it is halted at last by the barrier of the sea.

In this tempest of color there are quieter notes, too. Nestling amid the grasses are colonies of wild cyclamen with modest, downcast faces and ears flattened back, and with them, those most endearing of wildings, the yellow pansies. Their golden petals are dashed with brown and penciled with purple, each blossom jauntily perched upon a slender watch tower of a stalk, whence it looks about its small world in childlike faith and innocence; and snuggling close upon the breast of Mother Earth is many another little flower, content in quietude and lowliness—dainty nemophilas of a heavenly blue; fringed gilias yellow throated and pink; pallid creamcups and collinsias lifting pagoda-like spires in purple and lilac and white. More aloof are the mariposa tulips, which, like the aristocrats that they are, shrink from the touch of other elbows. They lift cups of varied color here and there among the taller grasses, upon which, as upon an emerald sea, billowed and tossed by the breeze, the lovely flowers ride and dance like cockle shell boats tugging at their anchors.

Our route follows with more or less digression the line of California's *El Camino Real,* the King's Highway that is to be; and many of our camping places are the sites of future Missions. On our third day from San Diego, or maybe the fourth, we are in the spacious valley in whose midst Mission San Luis Rey de Francia will some day lift its regal tower under Padre Peyri's benevolent sway, though it will not be for many a year after Padre Juan's earthly day is done. Another camp is beside the sea, where a little river comes singing from an aliso-bordered canyon to lose itself in the sea; and dimly in the west, there are, dreaming in the haze, two low islands which we believe to be Santa Catalina and San Clemente, both of Viscaino's naming, long ago. A mile or two

up the pretty canyon they will some day be founding a Mission to San Juan Capistrano.

Sometimes we traverse sunny *vegas*, or fertile plains, frightening ahead of us bands of antelope, sending hares and rabbits scurrying from their forms, and owls and squirrels into their burrows. Often these plains are close-carpeted with yellow baeria, as with cloth of gold. This is the sociable little plant that some day will be called "gold fields"—a lowly, stubborn indigene by no means disposed to be bullied out of its primitive rights in California soil, to which, in the teeth of generations of cattle, cultivation and intruder weeds, it seems determined to cling tenaciously to the end of time. It spreads, a cheerful rug of sunny color, far eastward to the foothills, where it is met by the buff and salmon of the shrubby monkey flowers. There, too, against a dark background of spiny leaves the clustered stars of the prickly phlox glow rosily, fellowshiping with Indian paint-brush and scarlet bugler. Where the slopes are open and damp, there grows a surprising and entrancing flower, the brown fritillary or, if you will, the chocolate lily. The flowers swing from a foot-high stalk, and seem like a voiceless chime of dusky bells in a floral *campanario*. Perhaps, in paradise, it will please Padre Juan to know that in the *gringo* years to come, little children will be calling these dark hued blossoms by a term, "Mission bells," that links them, in name at least, with the Mission adventure.

Picking our way ever northward in Portolá's footsteps of a year ago, up and down and around bald *lomas* and through *cañadas* "populated," as the quaint Spanish has it, with willows and sycamores and oaks, with abundance of roses of Castile and flowers innumerable, we skirt the noble valley that

will be the site of another Mission, that of San Gabriel Arcángel; and shortly we are fording *el Rio de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Porciúncula*—ambitious baptismal name, in which it is safe to say Padre Juan had a hand, of the unpretentious stream destined to cleanse the linen and irrigate the vines of the unborn pueblo of Los Angeles. Following its willowy marge up through the hills, sprinkled with live oaks and wild walnut trees, we emerge by and by into the broad vale of Santa Catalina de Bononia of the Live Oaks, populous with gentilism, where in a few years Padre "Napoleon's" Mission San Fernando Rey de España will swallow up the valley's ancient and statelier name.

Of all the colors with which the valleys and mesas greet us, none is so prevailing as yellow. Wherever the eyes rest, there it flashes up, the residual light of uncounted revolving suns. It is the hue that distinguishes a host of composites, and composites are everywhere abounding, not waiting as so many of their kindred do in the East, until autumn, but eagerly enlisting in the California spring pageant. Padre Juan gives them no name—how can he?—but they will be known in time as encelias, senecios, layias, coreopsis, eriophyllum, chaenactis, helianthus, the petite baeria that ravished us a while back, to say nothing of many another. One golden beauty, which in coming years will make glorious thickets nearly twice a man's height and incidentally play a pretty role in one of California's most famous romances not far from San Fernando—this golden flower we look for in vain in the primitive landscape, the wild mustard; for it is not California born, but an immigrant. Padre Juan, you may be sure, knew it well in Spain and could tell you of the toothsomeness of its young leaves in an *olla*. He will have it, beyond doubt, in his kitchen garden

at San Carlos. Indeed, he may even now have some seeds of it up his capacious sleeve and will be slyly dropping them as we go; for among the most tenaciously held traditions of Spanish Californians in another generation or two will be one to the effect that in the first days when the Padres set out from one Mission to walk to another, they sowed the seeds of this *mostaza negra* as they went, in order that the flowers thus established by the dim trail might make it easier for those who came after to follow.

Out of this valley we scramble and chop our way through chaparral and tumbled masses of strange element-sculptured rocks, and so down into the valley of the Rio Santa Clara, all starred and spangled with a myriad of bee-haunted flowers now growing familiar to our eyes,—gilias and suncups and poppies, paint brush and owl's clover, lupines and mimulus, pincushion flowers and tidy tips and thistle poppies, clarkias and blazing stars, and now another that betokens the waning spring, the fair godetia. By such flowery ways we descend to meet the sea again, and find flourishing villages of wide-awake, sea-faring, fish-catching aboriginals living in thatched huts, in shape like half an orange. The abundance of these comely folk in a region of evident fertility makes a Mission as good as foreordained, and it shall be called for the Seraphic Doctor San Buenaventura, all in good time.

Of course, we have been meeting Indians all along, very affable and gentle ones as a rule, the women honestly clad in short skirts to the knees, and mantelets of rabbit skins about the shoulders, but the men as unclothed as Adam before the fall, wearing their garment of nature as unblushingly as though it were of the richest fruit of the loom. At every village Padre Juan's eyes glisten with evangelistic fervor at the

thought of the rapidly approaching hour when he will be settled at last in his own dear Mission, thrusting the gospel sickle deep into the waiting harvest of souls. Meantime he finds a healthy interest in the material harvest of acorns, pine-nuts, wild seeds, and what-not, which, in simple friendliness and out of their poverty, the poor people offer in heaped up *batéas* and *coritas* to the queer strangers, and for which they are requited with gifts of glass beads, and now and then a ribbon or two. We may not always guess the flowers to which such offerings pertain; but of some we do learn. Certain little nut-like tubers, crisp and palatable, we find to be the corms of the wild hyacinth, or brodiaea—*cacomita,* as we might say in Spanish—whose pretty, blue clusters of flowers topping tall, slender stems, have been a common sight all along our way. Of the seeds none is so cherished as those of the wild chia, though so small individually that one marvels at the aboriginal genius who first saw a meal in them. They are mucilaginous and of a pleasant, nutty flavor, which is improved by parching. The Gentile way of doing this is to toss the seeds deftly about on a basket tray mingled with hot pebbles, or bits of ember, fresh plucked from the fire. A charming little flower is this chia, to which Padre Juan does not hesitate to give this Spanish name, because of a resemblance to a flower he knew in Spain. The tiny blue blossoms, compact in prickly heads, rise in tiers one above another, with the stem piercing them as though it were a skewer. The bland, oily seeds are soothing to fevered throats and ailing stomachs, so the Indians have discovered, and I think Padre Juan, who is ever zealous to add to his skill as soul's physician, a skill in bodily ills, is making a mental note of chia for his medicine chest. At any rate, the future will

tell of many a doctoring Padre making it serve like flaxseed for soothing teas and healing poultices. Another of the Gentile offerings that interests the good Padre is a sort of honeycomb, which we find is made of a kind of dew that exudes from the stems of the *carrizo* reed and is very sweet and tasty.

We are now upon the beach, that goes westering for many a league. In the mists, far off shore, are islands, and the sea is what Vizcaino called the *canal,* that is, channel, of Santa Barbara, because as he sailed it Saint Barbara's feast day fell. Following this beach amid a prodigality of yellow primroses and pink sand verbenas, glittering ice-plant and blushing posies of plump fig-marigolds, the seething surf on one side licking at our heels, and on the other the sage-clad sierra all but crowding us into the water, we come, on a day in May, upon a considerable lagoon which Padre Juan remembers as La Laguna de la Concepcion, for it was either he or Padre Gomez who named it a year ago. Here, in seemly fashion, the sierra withdraws a while inland and leaves a broad setting for a Mission, particularly as there is a waiting harvest of Indians all about; and it will, in truth, be for Santa Barbara Virgen y Mártir, a very famous Mission, as time and history will tell.

Still hugging the coast, now wrapped in fog, now bathed in sunshine, we reach, after many leagues, and pass around it, the wind-swept Punta de la Concepcion, also of Vizcaino's naming, and by and by cross at its mouth the Santa Inés River, though Padre Juan calls it not that, but Rio de Santa Rosa. Upon its banks, but well inland, two Missions will, in due time, be founded; the one dedicated to Santa Inés, the martyred virgin Saint Agnes whose Eve a young English poet will soon be singing in immortal verse; the other to La Purísima Concepcion "of the holy Virgin Mary, mother of God and

our Lady," of all the California Missions the one to suffer most ruinously in the terrible "Year of the Earthquakes," 1812. A few days more and we turn into a canyon at whose farther end we come out into a broad pocket among great mountains, where San Luis, Bishop of Tolosa, is one day to have his Mission, founded in rare prospect of spiritual spoil, for the region is peopled "to the four winds with much gentilism."

Here we are confronted with the wild Sierra de Santa Lucía, crested with frowning forest and gashed and seamed all about with many a precipitous canyon and bouldery, torrent-swept *barranca.* The western base pitches straight into the sea, leaving no foot-hold for travelers, so there is nothing for it but to pull tight the cinch and climb. A year ago poor Padre Juan and his comrades, with aching bones and thumping hearts, inched their way through the rough midst of it, the *credo* in their mouths; but this time we have the advantage of that brave pioneering, and go forward stout-heartedly, our way brightened in the May weather with the stately beauty of the buckeye's snowy thyrses and the billowy bloom of *chamiso* and mountain lilac, blue and white. So we come, one day, into the peaceful solitude, all sunlit, verdant and wild-flowery, where Mission San Antonio de Padua will be set, as soon as San Carlos has his Mission at Monterey; thence by rugged and devious ways we thread more wilderness, to descend at last, without mishap, through blossoming chaparral into a wide plain perfumed with wild rose, and sage, and rosemary, which Padre Juan calls San Elizario, though the maps of the future will have it Salinas. Somewhere not far from where we pass there is to be a Mission to "Our Most Sorrowful Lady of Solitude," which future generations will know as La Soledad, and

here Papa Arillaga, twice Governor of Spanish California, will come to be rid of the turmoil of a troublesome world and its politics, and "clothed in a habit which the religious of our Father Francis wear," will lay down his wearied mortality to rest, against the Last Day.

And now it is a straight course and a lightsome one, ever broadening and ever flowery, down to the sea and "the famous port of Monterey," girt about with pines tall, and straight, and innumerable, fit for a king's navy, just as Vizcaino had declared. Rippling and billowing to the surf's edge are white dunes decked gloriously with primroses, beach asters and rosy wild buckwheat, lupines and mock heather, and sweet smelling sand verbenas, yellow and pink. And past yonder point, where patriarchal cypresses with moss green tops blown flat and smooth as tables, defy the insistent tempests, are more dunes and a *vega* very fair to look upon, "suitable for corn fields and abounding with willows and other trees, wild black berries and infinitude of wild roses." Down its tranquil midst a little river winds, which we recognize as the River Carmelo in the valley of that name—of Vizcaino's bestowing, out of consideration for the three discalced Carmelites who accompanied him.

I confess this charming valley of Carmel takes on for me an added grace, when I recall it as the abode for so many years of Juan Crespi, and picture him, sometimes alone, sometimes with his beloved Junípero, walking its sunny slopes, gathering roses of Castile, learning pagan dialects and teaching Spanish, making adobes and helping with the barley mush, praying and baptizing, marrying and burying, always hammering away hopefully at aboriginal heads and hearts, to instil into them some notion of the divine providence and compassion.

You may wonder, if once in a while, tired nature would not cry out for a change from this exacting round. Perhaps it did; at any rate, I can imagine how complaisantly Padre Juan would embrace a call of ecclesiastical business that would take him through the flowery countryside to some Gentile rancheria where need abode, or, perhaps, to pay a visit to Padre Buenaventura Sitjar in his whitewashed Mission San Antonio, a bright jewel in its setting of emerald hills. One glorious outing his diaries tell of, taken with Don Pedro Fages and a few soldiers, seeking a site for a Mission to Saint Francis. Let us go with them.

Making a great sweep to the eastward of San Carlos, across the vale of San Elizario and over the jagged crest of the Gavilans, down into the valley where San Juan Bautista is later given a Mission, and north and east again, a height is attained whence a view is had of a great valley, the like of which cannot be found in all New Spain. O rare and heavenly sight! It is the month of March, and north and south and eastward as far as the eye reaches, is a scene that may not be described but only imagined, and fear not that the imagination will outrun the fact. It is a sea reaching to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, a sea of wild bloom with a tree-lined river and its tributaries in the midst, and the valley is what we now know as the San Joaquin with its northern prolongation, the Sacramento; but Crespi called it the valley of the River of San Francisco. Mile follows mile of blue and pink and white, of purple and gold, of cream and red and orange, and pale lavender—a natural garden of lupines waist high and shoulder high, of poppies, amsinckias, larkspur, gilias and popcorn flowers, nemophilas, Indian paint-brush and meadow-foam, owl's clover, penstemons, primroses, phacelias,

"Mission San Antonio, a bright jewel in its setting of emerald hills."

mints of a score of kinds—one is breathless before the enumeration is half over. It is, as one has said who knew it while it was still unspoiled, "one sweet bee-garden." And then, as the pageant pales and dies before the breath of summer, there comes another burst of color, the sheeted gold of sunflowers and tarweeds, spread illimitably.

Of another sort was the country, also traveled by Crespi, due northward from Monterey, where lay the nearest neighbors in that direction, Missions Santa Clara and San Francisco, a region of rare beauty, too, when the year is at its prime. Through sun-shot, fog-fed forests of magnificent conifers the trail runs, the dim aisles lighted up with a myriad blessed flowers—wood sorrel, baneberry, columbine, violets, iris, the shy redwood rose, and the goblin faces of the adder's tongue. Sword ferns gush up in stately fountains of verdure about the huge boles of the trees, mingling with the glistening evergreen of the red-stemmed huckleberry. You may be sure that Padre Juan does not fail to record these noble trees; and as nobody knows their proper name, one is invented for them by the Padre or his Spanish companions, from the color of the wood, *palo colorado*, that is, redwood, and to this day no better has been found. Nor does he overlook that slender aristocrat of the Coast forests of Central California, the exquisite madroño, a name Padre Juan borrows from Spain, because of its resemblance to the European strawberry tree so named. "It is," he admits, "of smaller fruit than the Spanish, but indeed of the same sort."

Clear of the redwoods, the trail enters a different land, a land of glorious live oaks, the ground swept by their branches, which parting with the hands, one enters, as into a vast, leafy room. These monarchs dot the plains for miles upon miles.

Deer graze on the abounding grasses or delicately drink at the shining streams, and on every side, through the trees, is the purple sweep of misty mountains lifted against a sapphire sky. I am sure Padre Juan fares blithely through such idyllic scenes, occupied a century later by many a town and many a palace, the while he praises God and finds his strength renewed and his wits sharpened for another bout with Satan and his doings.

It was returning from such a journey to the Mission of San Francisco, but in the autumn of the year, that Padre Juan felt a mortal sickness coming upon him, and shortly after reaching his little hut at the Mission that had so long been home to him, he took to his pallet, not to rise again. And there came Sister Death and bore him within the veil. His dust reposes beside Serra's before the altar of the ancient Mission on the Carmelo which was the child of their love, and where, as long as its walls stand, he will not be forgotten.

"It was returning from a journey to the Mission of San Francisco that Padre Juan felt a mortal sickness coming upon him."

Of David Douglas, the Scot, and How He Introduced the Wild Flowers of Old California into England

III

OF DAVID DOUGLAS, THE SCOT, AND HOW HE INTRODUCED THE WILD FLOWERS OF OLD CALIFORNIA INTO ENGLAND

THE years move on. Mission after Mission is founded, like links in a lengthening chain, until it is possible for a leisurely horseman, traveling from San Diego to San Francisco, to spend every night of the journey as a guest of the Lesser Brothers of Saint Francis; in the morning hear mass and be comfortably sped upon his way, with a *pax vobiscum* upon his head, a plump luncheon in his wallet, and never a copper to pay. The thatched and wattled first structures, hurriedly put up for instant use, have been gradually replaced by substantial edifices of adobe or of sculptured stone, consuming years of patient labor in the building; of an architecture reminiscent of old Spain and of a dignity worthier of a cause devoted to God's glory and the spread of His kingdom. Valleys and mesas and a thousand hills are dotted with herds and flocks guarded and cared for by the *mansos* of the Padres. Where once were only brambles and the lean fruits of the wilderness, are flourishing vineyards and olive yards, orchards of pear and peach, fig and orange,

decently hedged about with cactus and pomegranate; while in quiet *patios* within the Mission walls, shut away from the world's intrusions, are pleasant garden spots where the exiled Padres in their moments of loneliness, which, you may be sure, are many, take solace of flowers that speak to them in the language of their old homeland of Spain—Castilian roses and lilies of Mary, gillyflowers and pinks, oleanders and that best beloved plant of Spanish California, Saint Joseph's staff, or as we say, hollyhock.

Spain grows moribund. All sorts of heresies are in the air, and the old order suffers change. Throughout Hispanic America leaders "who knew not Joseph" are seizing the reins of government, and one after another Spain's New World provinces slip from her. California becomes an outpost of Mexico, and Mexican politicians are not for Saint Francis. So the Missions are marked for secularization and their star sinks to its setting. The non-Spanish world, long shut out, or but grudgingly tolerated for limited periods, begins to break through the weakened barriers, and to push its claims in this flowery corner of God's footstool. Toward the last of the year 1830, three days before Christmas, there lands at Monterey one David Douglas, a Scotch botanist and collector of plants for the Royal Horticultural Society of London, come on a quest for seeds and specimens of California's wild flowers, the fame of whose novel beauty has begun to be much talked of in Europe.

Midwinter as it is, according to the almanacs of men, Douglas finds that in Nature's calendar the spring is already well under way. In thickets and arroyos near the little adobe pueblo, the crimson splendor of the fuchsia-flowered gooseberry entrances him; no coddled fuchsia of the greenhouse,

he thinks, could be more beautiful; lupines and larkspurs, shoulder high, throng him in the damp cañadas; and in sunny swales the exquisite nemophila that we call baby-blue-eyes, and which Douglas writes down as "the harbinger of the California spring," spreads rugs of tenderest azure on the ground, just as it did in Padre Crespi's time. Every day yields unsuspected spoil; no miser among his money bags ever had a tithe of the joy that this beauty-loving young Scot has in the floral riches that nature lavishes about him, whose seed he garners and sends home to England.

Douglas spent nearly two years in California, principally in the region between San Francisco and Santa Barbara, and to him is to be credited the introduction into the gardens of Europe of a host of delightful California wild flowers cherished there as we Americans in our gardens cherish our exotics. The California poppy, for instance, has been cultivated abroad for nearly a century, and while it owes its name *Eschscholtzia* to an earlier visitor than Douglas, it was Douglas who gave it to the gardening world. Gilia, phacelia, collinsia, nemophila, mimulus, clarkia, godetia, lupine, cream-cups, blazing star, meadow-foam, ribes, penstemon, brodiæa, mariposa-tulip, camassia, erythronium, fritillaria—such, in many species, are Douglas' legacies to the gardens of the world, and in many cases these have developed under cultivation garden varieties of unusual beauty and range of color. Having thus set the fashion, Douglas was followed by other foreign collectors, as Hartweg, Lobb and John Jeffrey; and it is not too much to say that for two or three generations California's marvelous native flowers were better known abroad than at home.

Meantime what had California been doing with these same

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wild flowers? Ploughing them up, grazing them up, burning them up, burying them under concrete and asphalt, tearing them out by the roots to gratify a passing whim and then cast aside; until, like her Indians, her wild flora has been desolated and largely driven away from the homes of the people to find refuge too often only in deserts and mountain fastnesses. But while there are seeds there is hope; land is still plentiful enough for a bit of garden with every house; and all who will may yet have at their own doors a little Wild Garden of California. Turn the page and take the hint.

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